

## **The Skinny on Satan**

Pastor Joseph Clark – August 14, 2020

“Satan prowls but he’s a lion on a leash”

- Ann Voskamp

On November 24, 1981, Arne Cheyenne Johnson of Connecticut, was convicted of first-degree manslaughter for the killing of his landlord, Alan Bono. The case was known as the “Devil made me do it”. It represented the first court case in the history of the United States in which the defendant sought to prove his innocence on the basis that it was not he who was responsible for committing the murder, but the devil in the form of demonic possession. The judge ruled that the defense “could never be proven and was therefore infeasible in a court of law”. Johnson was subsequently convicted, though he only served five years of a 10-to-20-year sentence. According to a Gallup poll taken in 2001, 2004, and 2007, 61% of American people believe in the devil. 86% said that they believe in God. According to a 2013 “YouGov” survey 57% of Americans believe in the devil.

Wikipedia defines the devil as: the personification of evil as it is conceived in many and various cultures and religious traditions.

That same website goes on to define Satan as: ... an entity in the Abrahamic religions that seduces humans into sin or falsehood. In Christianity and Islam, he is usually seen as either a fallen angel or a genie, who used to possess great piety and beauty, but rebelled against God, who nevertheless allows him temporary power over the fallen world and a host of demons. In Judaism, Satan is typically regarded as a metaphor for the *yetzer hara*, or "evil inclination", or as an agent subservient to God.

Satan is referred to by several names and designations in The Bible:

Abaddon — Hebrew for "destruction"	King of the Bottomless Pit
Accuser	Lawless One
Adversary	Leviathan
Angel of Light (a being Satan can transform into)	Liar
Angel of the bottomless pit	Lucifer
Antichrist	Murderer
Apollyon — Greek for "destroyer"	Power of Darkness
Beast	Prince of the Power of the Air
Beelzebub — "Ruler of the demons"	Ruler of the Darkness
Belial	Ruler of this World
Deceiver	Serpent of Old
Devil	Son of Perdition
Dragon	Fallen Star
Enemy	Tempter
Evil One	Thief
Father of Lies	Wicked One

The Hebrew translation of the word Satan is “Adversary”. The Hebrew translation of the name Lucifer is “Shining One, Light Bringer, Light Bearer”, also referred to as “Light of the Dawn, Son of the Dawn, and Morning Star”, referring to the brightness of the planet Venus in the morning sky.

The first use of the word Satan is found in 1 Chronicles 21:1; chronologically, Job, which was written much earlier, surpasses this. Satan is found throughout Job 1 and 2. Satan literally means “adversary” in Hebrew. Lucifer first appears in the Old Testament in the King James Version:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12; KJV).

Although Satan is first mentioned by name in Job, previous historical accounts record his actions in Genesis 3, when Satan either appeared as a serpent to Eve or

influenced the serpent, and Genesis 4, where Cain belonged to him. He is mentioned or referred to throughout the Bible, however he is most prevalent in Matthew 4:1-11 where he appears to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. Satan appears as a troublemaker in both small and large forms. For example, in Matthew 16:23, and Mark 8:33 when Peter rebukes Jesus's plan for crucifixion, Christ calls out Satan as a stumbling block who is tempting Peter away from the necessary work of God. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." He appears in a larger form in Luke 22:3 when Judas gives into the temptation to betray Christ for self-gain: <sup>3</sup>Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

Satan, Lucifer, and The Devil are referred to several times throughout the New Testament in the form of "false accuser, Satan, slanderer", dragon in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, as well as the "evil one" in several places. Revelation 12:9 calls him "that ancient serpent" or "serpent of old," and Matthew 4:3 calls him the "tempter."

He is further referred to as Abaddon (destruction), Apollyon (destroyer, Revelation 9:11), Beelzebub or Beelzebul (Matthew 12:27) and Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15). Satan is also referred to as the god of this world/age (2 Corinthians 4:4), prince of this world (John 12:31), and father of lies (John 8:44).

Are Satan, the Devil, and Lucifer one and the same? Some churches' traditions would answer this as "no." However, it stands to reason that if we piece together what God tells us in The Word, we know the following.

1) There once was an archangel named Lucifer who was among the most powerful of God's angels, and he shone very brightly in Heaven. Out of pride, narcissism, and ambition, he wished to be as powerful as God, and led other angels to rebel against God. This led to his fall and the fall of the angels who sided with him, resulting in Lucifer and his followers being reduced to demons.

2) He was judged by God and "thrown to the Earth". His power has become completely perverted. He is referred to further, not by his name, but by his function. Satan. The adversary.

3) He was defeated by Christ, as Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Christ rose from the dead, breaking Satan's power over fallen humanity.

4) Although he is defeated, Satan and his fallen angels (demons) harass Christians with temptation and lies, as well as distracting mankind away from Christ. His mission is to oppress mankind with sin, fear, lies, perversity, and destruction. He will do this until the second coming of Christ. Why does he do this? During World War 2 there were Nazi death camp commanders who executed as many remaining prisoners as was possible, after they received word that the war was lost. Satan operates in the same way. His scorched earth policy is to cause as much damage and suffering as he can, even though he knows that he is defeated.

5) An angel will be sent by God with chains to bind Satan to a pit over the 1000-year millennial kingdom over which Christ will rule. After that time, he will be released for a little while, and then he will eventually be thrown into the lake of fire for eternity.

On the topic of Satan, The Holy Spirit tells us in The Word:

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.”  
- Isaiah 14:12-15

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!”  
– Isaiah 14:12

“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

- 2 Corinthians 11:14

“And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

- Luke 10:18

“Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

- Revelation 12:7-9

“And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

- Revelation 12:9

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

- 1 Peter 5:8

“And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

- Revelation 20:10

And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

- Matthew 4:3

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

- James 4:7

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

- Ephesians 6:11

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

- Romans 16:20

“We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

- 1 John 5:19

God tells us in The Word that Satan rules this world. How does that work? If God is the Merciful ruler of all existence? Think of it in these terms. A country might have a president or prime minister, and in certain corners there are organized crime bosses. God permits Satan’s corrupt behavior and influence, as it serves a purpose in the big picture. If we choose to receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become part of God’s kingdom now until our bodies die. When our bodies die, we join him in his Heavenly kingdom. What is Satan to us? The enemy. The adversary, the deceiver, the liar. He is evil. An angelic intellect who is dedicated to perversity, abomination, and evil. How do we resist Satan?

By being strong in faith. By following Christ’s example:

Matthew 4:1-11

**4** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,  
and they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’<sup>[e]</sup>”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Satan is only as strong as we are weak. He is only as frightening as we are fearful. The power of Christ can flick Satan and his demons off one’s shoulder like a flea. However, we must have strong faith.

Paul tells us how:

Ephesians 6:10-18

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

How do we detect Satan at work in the world today?

Simply put, anything that distracts us from the Gospel and Grace of Christ, and anything that debauches us by capitalizing on human frailties. Temptations of the flesh being one of the most obvious ways.

We must be vigilant to listen to The Holy Spirit's narrative for us, not Satan's narrative for us. God does not speak to us in terms of fear, self loathing, perversity, corruption, indulgence in sin. If you are drawn to sinful behavior and you are listening to rationales to justify sinful acts, that is Satan's narrative. Not God's. Satan applauds and encourages our sinful behavior.

Satan's mission is the destruction of Christian souls. He does not have to focus personal attention on non-believers and those who pursue false religions. He can influence them through mass measures. He distracts mankind with false prophets who corrupt God's word, pornography, misinformation, fear, and invitations to indulgences. Satan hates man. His personal attention is given to saved Christians, in the form of demonic harassment. It seems that the greater an asset one is for the Kingdom of God, the greater the oppression they can face at times.

“Our best defenses do not lie in obsessing over daily habits, word choices, or even spiritual disciplines, deeply important as they may be. Rather, we render ourselves more difficult targets for Apollyon when we lean our full weight on the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that when Satan comes close, we do not crumble beneath the weight of his accusations.”

- Abby Perry

“The devil is a peace stealer, and he works hard to set us up to get upset. But we can learn how to change our approach, so we do not live upset all of the time. And Jesus gives us the best example to follow.”

- Joyce Meyer



“Be ever engaged, so that whenever the devil calls, he may find you occupied.”

- St. Jerome

“Hell is the highest reward that the devil can offer you for being a servant of his.”

- Billy Sunday

“When you believe in God, you've got to believe in the all-powerful God. He is not just God; He's the all-powerful God and He has total control over everyone's life. The Devil, on the other hand, is a real character that's trying his hardest to tear your life apart.”

- Alice Cooper, Born Again Christian

The greatest misconception that many have is that Satan is all powerful. He is not. In no way is Satan the antithesis of God. Satan is a fallen angel. The next is that he does not exist. That he is a metaphor for evil. This is wrong. The First Letter of John goes so far as to say, “The reason the son of man appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” Satan does exist and understanding that he exists is a step in combatting any attacks that he launches at you or your family.

When Satan is nipping at your heels by lying to you or tempting you, remember that you are not alone, and that you are not defenseless. Our almighty God goes before you as your protector. Focus your attention on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Preoccupy yourself in his Word.

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